

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-15 as set forth in the Official Action dated April 5, 2004, is respectfully requested in light of the above amendment to Claim 15 and by reason of right of priority provided under 35 USC 119.

Claim 15 has been amended so as to be presented in a proper Markush group format and the rejection under §112 has accordingly been overcome.

With respect to the rejection under §102, the applicant submits that the rejection has been overcome by reason of the right of priority provided by §119 of the patent statute. Specifically, a certified copy of priority application DE 199 42 518.3 has been filed and acknowledged, note paragraph 12 of the Official Action, and the right of priority was claimed in the Declaration filed May 16, 2002. Also, a translation of the certified copy of the priority application is submitted herewith, and it is hereby stated that the translation of the certified copy is accurate.

As will be apparent, the translation of the priority application closely conforms to the present application as filed, and it is clear that the priority application fully supports the invention as set forth in Claims 1-15 of the present application. Also, the priority date of September 7, 1999 antedates the effective date of the cited Hutter et al. patent.

It is accordingly submitted that both rejections as set forth in the Official Action have been overcome, and that the

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present application is in condition for immediate allowance.
Such action is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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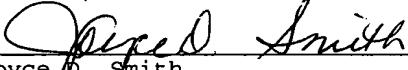
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